

me with great gusto that the land around that town would yield from 35 to 75 bushels of wheat to the acre and from 100 to 200 bushels of oats, the latter weighing 42 pounds to the bushel; the timber, however, he acknowledged "wasn't much to brag on."

The one well-defined road we had been following all day broadened out towards sunset into a valley, showing in turn several depressions in the snow—here much deeper—which we assumed to be roads. No one at Saskatchewan was able to direct us intelligently, and not a soul had been seen since leaving there from whom we could ask our way. Grierson, who was driving us, and who is one of the Queen's Hotel proprietors, had never before been over the road, but his bump of direction was well placed and abnormally developed. People in this country do not seem to consider knowledge of the roads necessary to reaching their destination. They just start off on the one main and almost only trail, which they follow to its end, when they continue on in the direction of their objective point. Roads are few and far between in this section, and disappear altogether when you get one hundred miles north of Edmonton. The alleged road to La Biche, which bears to the east of north, is the longest, and the end; beyond, all travel is by dogs in winter and canoe in summer. Grierson knew that Beaver Lake Creek was the point we were booked to reach that night in order to make La Biche in three days' travel from Edmonton, and he was sure it lay to the north-east. So we pegged on, until finally, after chasing several lights that turned out to be the wrong ones, and once nothing less lofty than a planet, which in this far North hung near the horizon, we found the log cabin of Beaver Lake Creek's most distinguished settler. I say distinguished because his was the only cabin in those parts which boasted of two rooms and a second story—an extravagance, he informed us, he had indulged in with the idea of one day, when the section in which he had located became more populous, putting a stock of merchandise into the "other room," and utilizing the top story as a dormitory for travellers.—From "On Snow-Shoes to the Barren Grounds," by Casper W. Whitney, in Harper's Magazine for December.

It appears that in Paris its population of 2,250,000 pays nearly as much rent as London, with twice the number of inhabitants. The 2,250,000 Parisians have only 83,000 dwellings to live in, while the number of houses that the 5,000,000 Londoners occupy is nearly ten times as many. In Paris, where the people live in flats, there are on an average over 270 persons residing in each house. In London the average is only seven persons to a house. Yet for much less comfort and space the Parisians have to pay little short of double the rent paid by Londoners. The total annual rent of Paris, says *The Debats*, is now 775,000,000 francs, or \$155,000,000, while Londoners, who are twice the number of Parisians, only pay \$185,000,000 for far more comfortable dwelling accommodation. The average rent paid by Londoners is between \$35 and \$40, while in Paris it is nearly \$70.—*London Times*.

The platinum mines are in a few hands, and the price of this metal, so useful in electrical work, is now ten times that of gold.

Our Young Folks.

"JACK'S GRANDMA."

Did you ever have a grandma,
With her dear and wrinkled face,
And her smile so bright and happy
That you felt the dearest place
Was to sit right close beside her,
And to drink in every word,
For she told such wondrous stories—
Such as I had never heard.

If I wanted any goodies
She was sure to be around,
And she'd say, "Why, Jack is hungry,"
And those cookies would be found.
If I tore my pants or jacket,
First to grandma I would go;
She would mend them, oh, so nicely,
And dear mother never knew.

'Tis so sweet to have a grandma,
And to her your secrets tell,
As she knits the baby's stockings
In her rocker by the well;
Every one that passes loves her,
I can tell it by their smile.
Oh, my dear, old darling grandma,
May you live a long, long while.
—J. W. Bolton, in *Christian Work*.

BEGIN RIGHT.

'Boys,' said papa, coming in through the yard as the rain began to fall, 'put on your rubber coats and boots, and run out and clear away the heap of dirt you threw up yesterday around the cistern platform. Make a little channel where the ground slopes, for the water to run off below.'

Hal and Horace thought this great fun, and were soon at work. But presently papa called from a window.

'You are not doing that right, boys. You've turned the water all toward the house. It will be running into the cellar window next thing you know. Turn your channel away from the house at once.'

'But this is the easiest way to dig it now, papa,' called Hal. 'Before it does any harm we'll turn it off.'

'Do it right in the beginning,' said papa, in a voice that settled things. 'Begin right, no matter if it is more trouble. Then you will be sure that no harm can be done, and won't have to fix things up afterward.'

The boys did as they were told, and were just in time to keep a stream of water from reaching the cellar window.

Soon after this, papa found Horace reading a book borrowed from one of the boys.

'That is not the kind of reading that I allow,' he said. 'Give it back at once.'

'Please let me finish the book,' pleaded Horace. 'Then I can stop reading this kind, before it does me any harm.'

'No,' said papa, repeating the lesson of the rainy day, 'begin right in your reading, and in all your habits, and then you will not have to change. Take the right direction first, and then you'll be sure of it.'

A CURIOSITY OF AUSTRALIA

The most wonderful forest tree in the world, perhaps, is the "cannibal tree" of Australia, which some one has most aptly called "the most wonderful of God's many wonders in vegetable life." It grows up in the shape of a huge pineapple, and seldom attains a height of more than 11 ft. It has a series of broad, board-like leaves, growing in a fringe at the apex, which reminds one of a gigantic Central American agrave. When standing erect these broad thick leaves hide a curious-looking arrangement, which appears to perform the same functions as those of the pistils in flowers. Naturally these board-like leaves,

which are from 10 ft to 12 ft long in the smaller specimens, and from 15 to 20 in the larger, hang to the ground, and are strong enough to bear a man's weight. In old aboriginal times in the antipodean wilds the natives worshipped the cannibal trees under the name of the "Devil tree," the chief part of the ceremony consisting of driving one of their number up the leaves of the tree to the apex. The instant the victim would touch the so-called "pistils" of the monster the leaves would instantly fly together like a trap, squeezing the life out of the intruder. Early travellers declared that the tree held its victims until every particle of flesh disappeared. On this account it is called the "cannibal tree."

BIRDS IN ALASKA.

Great numbers of wild birds nest in Alaska. Ducks, geese, and swans build their nests on the ground. In the nesting area of Alaska it is said that the nests are so thick that it is almost impossible to walk without stepping on one. The natives are experts in killing this game. They do it with a peculiar weapon. Six sinew strings, about three feet in length, are fastened together by a quill at one end. At the other end of each sinew is a ball of ivory, pear-shaped, and about as large as a walnut. The hunter, with this in his hand, approaches the flock at duck. He sets these balls whirling. When the flock rises to fly, these whirling sinews are thrown into the flock. They catch about the necks or legs of the birds, and they are captured. Sometimes as many as a dozen are captured at one throw. Travelers are sorry to see that the nests of these wild birds are so carelessly robbed of eggs. The eggs are wanted for the albumen which is used in manufacturing, but eggs are taken that cannot be used, and these are thrown away. So great is the destruction of eggs and birds that the birds each year occupy much less space in nesting.

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